

Remarks

This is in response to the final Office Action dated January 6, 2006. Claim 20 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 1 is amended. Claims 1-8 and 16-19 remain pending. Reconsideration is requested in view of the following remarks.

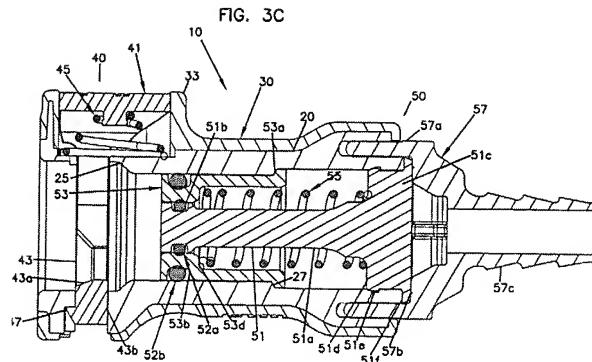
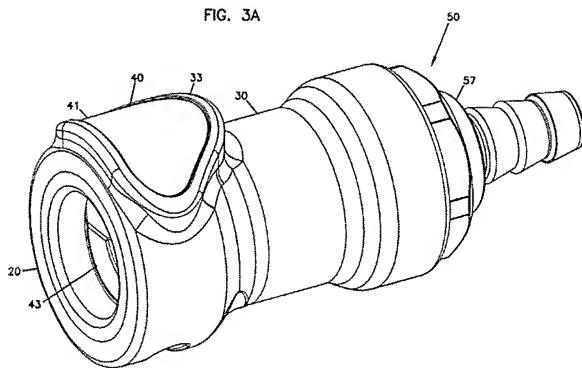
Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, and the correctness of the rejection is not conceded.

It is respectfully suggested that one skilled in the art would understand that example overmold portion 30 disclosed in the present application forms a molecular bond with coupler body 20. See Application, p. 10, ll. 1-4. In any event, claim 20 is canceled herein to move the application into condition for allowance. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection are therefore requested.

Claims 1-8 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Carstens (U.S. Patent No. 4,863,201). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration in view of the following comments.

Claim 1 recites an overmold portion including a shroud portion partially covering said outer member of said latch assembly, said shroud portion being a wall extending outward from the outer sidewall and adjacent and around said outer member of said latch assembly, said wall extending in a direction transverse to said outer surface, and a top portion of said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as an outermost portion of said outer member protrudes from said outer surface.

One example embodiment of an overmold portion with a shroud portion configured as recited by claim 1 is shown in Figures 3A and 3C of the present application, reprinted below.



Application Serial No. 10/612,475  
Examiner: Aaron M. Dunwoody  
Art Unit: 3679

PATENT  
Docket No.: 1945.185US01

For at least these reasons, Carstens fails to disclose or suggest a top portion of said wall protruding from said outer surface at least a same distance as an outermost portion of said outer member protrudes from said outer surface, as recited by claim 1. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 1, as well as claims 2-8 and 16-19 that depend therefrom, are therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carstens in view of Wood (U.S. Patent No. 5,733,145). This rejection is respectfully traversed, and the correctness of the rejection is not conceded.

Claim 20 is canceled herein. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection are therefore requested.

With these remarks, Applicants believe that the claims now pending are in a condition for allowance. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested. If any further questions arise, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,  
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.  
P.O. Box 2903  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903  
(612) 332-5300

Date: March 30, 2006

By: *Robert A. Kalinsky*  
Name: Robert A. Kalinsky  
Reg. No.: 50,471